

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 /070 W
-----081054 120025Z /23

R 110735Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8812
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY RANGOON

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2197

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP BG PK BM
SUBJECT: NEW BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR TO BURMA

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. ZAHIRUDDIN AHMED, PRESENTLY BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR TP PAKISTAN, WAS APPOINTED APRIL 9 TO BE AMBASSADOR TO BURMA. FOLLOWING IS BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.

2. ZAHIRUDDIN WAS BORN NOVEMBER 11, 1917, IN THE HOOGHLY DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL. HE RECEIVED AN M.A. FROM CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY AND A LAW DEGREE FROM DACCA UNIVERSITY. ZAHIRUDDIN BEGAN A POLITICAL CAREER EARLY, SERVING IN THE STUDENT MOVEMENT IN PRE-PARTITION BENGAL AS AN OFFICER-BEARER OF THE ALL-BENGAL MUSLIM STUDENTS' LEAGUE. HE WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE, MYGANIZED IN 1949, WAS IMPRISIONED SEVERAL TIMES THEREAFTER AND IN 1956 SERVED AS MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH IN THE PAKISTAN CABINET OF PRIME MINISTER SUHRAWARDY. ZAHIRUDDIN WAS ELECTED TO THE PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN THE DECEMBER, 1970, ELECTION JUST PRIOR TO THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE FOR BANGALDESH.

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3. IN ADDITION TO HIS POLITICAL INTERESTS, ZAHIRUDDIN HAS HAD A LEGAL CAREER, FIRST JOINING THE DACCA BAR IN 1947 AND RISING EVENTUALLY TO BE AN ADVOCATE OF THE SUPREME COURT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. DURING THIS DAYS AS PAKISTAN MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, ZAHIRUDDIN WAS CONSIDERED AN

INTELLIGENT AND ABLE POLITICIAN. HIS POLITICAL CAREER IN EAST PAKISTAN/BANGLADESH HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT HAMPERED BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED A TRUE MUSLIM BENGALI, HAVING COME ORIGINALLY FROM WEST BENGAL. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN WHY HE DID NOT RECEIVE A CABINET POSITION IN THE FIRST BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT OF SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN. HIS PERSONAL MANNER HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS VIGOROUS AND EVEN AT TIMES ELEGANT. HE SPEAKS ENGLISH FLUENTLY. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS ONE SON.

5. THE COMMENTS OF EMBASSY ISLAMABAD WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
SCHNEIDER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, AMBASSADORS, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978DACCA02197
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780156-0562
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780471/aaaacior.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f04d20b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3013620
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR TO BURMA
TAGS: PDIP, PINR, BG, PK, BM, (AHMED, ZAHIRUDDIN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f04d20b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014